

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached drawing sheet includes changes to Fig. 11. The only change to Fig. 11 is the addition of the label "Prior Art."

Attachment: Replacement Sheet

REMARKS

Claims 3 and 5-7 are pending. Claims 1, 2, 4, 8, and 9 have been canceled. The applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

A copy of the form PTO-1449 that was submitted on March 27, 2006 was returned with the office action, and the examiner initialed all but one of the items listed. The sole item not initialed was the European Office Action issued on February 13, 2006. However, no reason was given by the examiner for not considering this item. Therefore, the applicants believe that the failure to initial this item was an oversight. The applicants respectfully request that the examiner send another copy of the form PTO-1449 that was submitted on March 27, 2006 on which the examiner has initialed the European office action. Otherwise, the applicants respectfully request an explanation as to why this item was not considered.

The drawings were objected to for failing to designate Fig. 11 as prior art. Fig. 11 has been amended in the attached replacement sheet, and Fig. 11 is now designated with the legend "Prior Art." Therefore, this objection should be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 2, 8, and 9 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Yoshikawa et al. Claims 1, 2, 8, and 9 have been canceled, and this rejection will not be discussed.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 8, and 9 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Nobe et al. Claims 1, 2, 4, 8, and 9 have been canceled, and this rejection will not be discussed.

Claim 4 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yoshikawa in view of the admitted prior art. Claim 4 has been canceled, and this rejection will not be discussed.

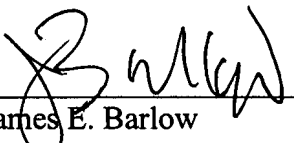
Claims 3 and 5-7 were objected to and were said to be allowable if written in independent form. Claim 3 has been written in independent form and thus should be in condition for allowance. The wording of amended claim 3 is not identical to that of original claims 1, 2, and 3 because minor changes have been made for clarity; however, no substantive changes were made.

Claims 5-7 depend on claim 3 and thus are considered to be in condition for allowance based on their dependency. Minor changes have been made to claims 6 and 7 to correct grammatical or typing errors.

In view of the foregoing, the applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. A timely notice to that effect is respectfully requested. If questions relating to patentability remain, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone.

If there are any problems with the payment of fees, please charge any underpayments and credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-1147.

Respectfully submitted,


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